OCEANA COUNTY
RECREATION PLAN

Prepared by:
Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission
Ms. Jean Pease, Chairperson  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
Oceana County  
County Building, P.O. Box 14  
Hart, MI 49420  

Dear Ms. Pease:  

SUBJECT: Oceana County Recreation Plan  

Please find attached your copy of the recreation plan checklist recently submitted to our office for approval. Your recreation plan has been approved.  

Your recreation plan will expire December 31, 2014.  

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Our address is: Grants Management, Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 30425, Lansing, MI 48909-7925.  

Sincerely,  

Lisa McTiernan, Grant Coordinator  
Grants Management  
517-241-4717  
mctiernanl@michigan.gov  

Attachment
**COMMUNITY PARK, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND GREENWAY PLAN CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST**

By Authority of Parts 19, 703 and 716 of Act 451, P.A. 1994, as amended, submission of this information is required for eligibility to apply for grants.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Complete, obtain certification signatures and submit this checklist with a locally adopted recreation plan.

All recreation plans are required to meet the content and local approval standards listed in this checklist and as outlined in the *Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans* provided by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). To be eligible for grant consideration, plans must be submitted to the DNR prior to the grant application deadline with a completed checklist that has been signed by an authorized official(s) of the local unit of government(s) submitting the plan.

### PLAN INFORMATION

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of Plan:</th>
<th>OCEANA COUNTY RECREATION PLAN</th>
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<tr>
<td>List the community names (including school districts) covered by the plan</td>
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### PLAN CONTENT

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please check each box to certify that the listed information is included in the final plan.

- ☑ 1. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION
- ☑ 2. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE
  - ☑ Roles of Commission(s) or Advisory Board(s)
  - ☑ Department, Authority and/or Staff Description and Organizational Chart
  - ☑ Annual and Projected Budgets for Operations, Maintenance, Capital Improvements and Recreation Programming
  - ☑ Current Funding Sources
  - ☑ Role of Volunteers
  - ☑ Relationship(s) with School Districts, Other Public Agencies or Private Organizations
    - ☑ Regional Authorities or Trailway Commissions Only
    - Description of the Relationship between the Authority or Commission and the Recreation Departments of Participating Communities
    - ☑ Articles of Incorporation
- ☑ 3. RECREATION INVENTORY
  - ☑ Description of Methods Used to Conduct the Inventory
  - ☑ Inventory of all Community Owned Parks and Recreation Facilities
  - ☑ Location Maps (site development plans recommended but not required)
  - ☑ Accessibility Assessment
  - ☑ Status Report for all Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities
- ☐ 4. RESOURCE INVENTORY (OPTIONAL)
- ☑ 5. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS
6. DESCRIPTION OF THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

- Description of the Method(s) Used to Solicit Public Input Before or During Preparation of the Plan, Including a Copy of the Survey or Meeting Agenda and a Summary of the Responses Received
- Copy of the Notice of the Availability of the Draft Plan for Public Review and Comment
- Copy of the Notice for the Public Meeting Held after the One Month Public Review Period and Before the Plan’s Adoption by the Governing Body(ies)
- Copy of the Minutes from the Public Meeting

7. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

8. ACTION PROGRAM

PLAN ADOPTION DOCUMENTATION

Plans must be adopted by the highest level governing body (i.e., city council, county commission, township board). If planning is the responsibility of a Planning Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Recreation Advisory Board or other local Board or Commission, the plan should also include a resolution from the Board or Commission recommending adoption of the plan by the governing body.

The local unit of government must submit the final plan to both the County and Regional Planning Agency for their information. Documentation that this was done must be submitted with the plan to the DNR.

Items 1, 3 and 4 below are required and must be included in the plan.

APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION: For multi-jurisdictional plans, each local unit of government must pass a resolution adopting the plan. Prepare and attach a separate page for each unit of government included in the plan.

- 1. Official resolution of adoption by the governing body dated: 10-22-09
- 2. Official resolution of the Ocean County Parks & Recreation Commission or Board recommending adoption of the plan by the governing body, dated: 12-26-09
- 3. Copy of letter transmitting adopted plan to County Planning Agency dated: 10-26-09
- 4. Copy of letter transmitting adopted plan to Regional Planning Agency dated: 10-26-09

OVERALL CERTIFICATION

NOTE: For multi-jurisdictional plans, Overall Certification must include the signature of each local unit of government. Prepare and attach a separate signature page for each unit of government included in the plan.

I hereby certify that the recreation plan for

Ocean County

(Local Unit of Government)

above and as set forth by the DNR.

Authorized Official for the Local Unit of Government

This completed checklist must be signed and submitted with a locally adopted recreation plan to:

GRANTS MANAGEMENT
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PO BOX 30425
LANSING, MI 48909-7525

DNR USE ONLY - APPROVAL

The recreation plan is approved by the DNR and the community(ies) covered by the plan, as listed on page 1 of this checklist is/are eligible to apply for recreation grants through

Date

By

Grants Management

Date

Page 2 of 2
PR1924-1 (Rev. 01/11/2006)
RESOLUTION APPROVING OCEANA COUNTY RECREATION PLAN

Moved by Mr. Powers and seconded by Mr. Simon to approve the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission developed and approved the Oceana County Five Year Recreation Plan in 1998;

WHEREAS, the Oceana County Board of Commissioners, in support of the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission, recognizes the increased recreation needs of its citizens and the importance of meeting such needs now and in the future;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Oceana County Board of Commissioners approves the 2009 Oceana County Recreation Plan as prepared and adopted by the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission on October 20, 2009.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That certified copies of this Resolution be submitted to the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Roll call vote: Powers, yes; Simon, yes; Byl, yes; Kolbe, yes; Malburg, yes; Brown, yes; and, Van Sickle, yes. Motion carried.

CERTIFICATION:

The undersigned, being the Clerk of Oceana County, does hereby certify that on the 22nd day of October, 2009, the Oceana County Board of Commissioners did adopt the above Resolution at its Regular Meeting.

Rebecca J. Griffin, Clerk
Oceana County
Board of Commissioners
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1. INTRODUCTION

This Document, the Oceana County Recreation Plan, is intended to guide present and future recreational resource development within the County including parkland, parks facilities, recreation programs, and public open space.

This plan, in addition to serving as a guide for recreation facility and program development, is prepared to satisfy the requirements set forth by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Recreation plans are required by the MDNR for state and federal grant eligibility to encourage communities to take a long-term view of their parks and recreation futures. Plans must not be older than five years and must be on file with the MDNR in Lansing. For this reason, it is recommended that this plan be revisited in five years to review priorities, keep pace with changing conditions, and maintain grant funding eligibility.

a. Overview of the Planning Process

In 2009, the Oceana Parks and Recreation Commission began developing a recreation plan for Oceana County. Every effort has been made to present information that is current and accurate. The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission shall not be held liable for any errors of omission related to this Plan. This Plan is a general planning document. Therefore, a thorough investigation with original research materials should be undertaken before proceeding with any specific implementation decisions.

Citizen input is very important in addressing recreation-related issues facing County residents as a whole. The planning process is most effective when all sectors of the citizenry provide input into the future of their community. The opportunity for input was provided through Town Meetings, Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, and public hearings. Notices of these meeting were published in the Oceana Herald-Journal, a newspaper of general circulation in Oceana County.

b. Function of the Plan

This particular plan is intended to serve as a guide to future County decisions and actions related to recreation. It should be used by the decision-makers of the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission based on the wishes of the general public and the availability of resources.

The following are specific objectives of this Plan:

- To provide a means for County residents to participate in determining the future of their community, thereby promoting the interests of the entire community.
- To establish long-range goals and objectives to be used as guides for future decisions regarding public parks development, recreation and open space.
To outline implementation strategies that can ensure future development is consistent with the goals and objectives of Oceana County.

To provide a detailed inventory of recreation facilities within the County and assist decision-makers with development decisions related to those facilities.

To designate suitable areas for future recreation development while encouraging the preservation and conservation of natural resources.

To provide means by which grant funding can be secured for recreation related acquisition and development projects.

To prepare a plan that is consistent with Michigan Public Act 156 of 1917, and Michigan Public Act 261 of 1965, both acts as amended.

c. Legal Basis and Development

This plan is enabled by Michigan law, but does not carry the power of statutory law or ordinance. Its principles are derived from Public Act 156 of 1917, an act authorizing governmental units to operate systems of public recreation and playgrounds which states, in part that:

Sec. 1 (2-4). Counties may acquire, equip, and maintain land, buildings, or other recreation facilities. County may employ a superintendent of recreation and assistants. Counties may vote and expend funds for the operation of such a system.


The process of developing a recreation plan began with an analysis of Oceana County and its social and physical attributes, such as population and housing characteristics, economic state, existing land information, etc. Where appropriate, historical trends were analyzed to provide insight as to what the future may hold.

Once this information inventory was completed, public input was sought. Public meetings were held on 8-19-08 and 5-26-09 to solicit information pertaining to recreation issues, concerns and opportunities facing Oceana County. All citizens were invited and encouraged to take part in the meetings through press releases in the local newspapers, postings at frequently used County buildings, and by word of mouth. Approximately 10 people attended or replied to the two meetings which were hosted at the Oceana County Building in Hart. Those that could not attend the meetings telephoned in comments to be considered by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Meeting attendees were provided with a brief overview of the recreation planning process as well as what was expected of them. Ideas that had been brainstormed and discussed by the County Parks and Recreation Commission were also circulated.
so that residents were aware of the discussion that had been taking place in regards to public recreation. This list of items served as a starting point for discussion related to the future of recreation in Oceana County.

The activities that follow this process are of great importance. The input from the public meetings helped to form future goals and objectives. These goals and objectives should be implemented and monitored based on their feasibility, effectiveness, and context within the development plans for Oceana County. The status of these goals and objectives should be reviewed on a regular basis, and when appropriate, this plan should be modified to reflect changes of a physical nature or those of general public sentiment. As was mentioned previously, this process should be repeated every five years to ensure an accurate and timely reflection of the needs and desires of the citizens and to maintain grant funding eligibility.

2. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The following information provides detailed descriptions of the geographical and historical characteristics of Oceana County. It is important that this information be analyzed in order to provide a foundation on which to build the goals and objectives.

a. Geographic Context

Oceana County is located in Michigan along the shore of Lake Michigan approximately half way between the Michigan - Indiana border and the Grand Traverse Bay. Mostly rural in nature, Oceana County is a leading agriculture provider of fruits and vegetables as prime farmland is prevalent. The 536 square miles that Oceana County are well-known for abundant natural resources, diverse recreational opportunities, and plenty of fresh air and water. The shoreline of Lake Michigan is one of the more beautiful stretches of beach in the State of Michigan. Although the area is rural in nature, residents are a relatively short trip away from many metropolitan areas including Muskegon, Grand Rapids, Detroit and Chicago. Detroit and Chicago are each about a four hour drive from the county seat of Hart. Residents of Oceana County can enjoy the serenity of rural life and the beauty of open spaces while still maintaining the opportunity to experience the amenities associated with the urban lifestyle.
Map 1 Oceana County, Michigan and Planning Region 14
b. Community Information

Oceana County is comprised of sixteen townships totaling 536 square miles. The county is bordered by Mason County to the north, Newaygo County to the east, Muskegon County to the south, and Lake Michigan to the west. The county seat for Oceana County is the City of Hart, which is centrally located within the county.

In addition to its position as a mostly rural area, Oceana County has a number of other notable features. There are 65 inland lakes, winding rivers, and many natural features in the County. U.S. Highway 31, a four-lane, all-weather, limited access freeway, serves as the major route used to travel north-south within the County. This roadway serves as a vital corridor with the rest of West Michigan and serves to link Oceana County with the Chicago area and beyond. State route M-20 is an all-weather two-lane roadway that traverses east-west through the southern portion of the County. M-20 serves to link the county with State route M-37 and U. S. Highway 131, two other major north-south routes through West Michigan. State route M-120 runs along the southeastern portion of the County and serves as a link to northeast Muskegon County and eventually the Muskegon urban area.

There is no significant rail activity in the county as the previous segment of rail was converted to the Hart-Montague Bicycle Trail State Park. The trail is a State Park facility that runs from the center of Oceana County south to northern Muskegon County. The trail is paved and utilized by many user groups.

Oceana County and its features are depicted later in this document on Map 2-Oceana County Base Map and Recreation Facilities.

c. History of Community

Oceana County has a rich and detailed history that dates back as far as March 2, 1831. Seven years before Michigan was to become a state, the territorial legislature established an "Oceana County." This included all of the present Oceana County along with parts of Muskegon, Montcalm and Kent Counties. The first white settlement in Oceana County was on Lake Michigan near Whiskey Creek. A sawmill was central to this first settlement of the area as the lumber industry provided most of the employment opportunities to the residents of early Oceana County.

It was not until 1855, however, that the State of Michigan Legislature established Oceana County with its present-day boundaries. The County was divided into three parts and townships were established that year, those townships being: Pentwater, which stretched across the northern portion of the county; Stony Creek (which was later known as Benona) which covered the middle portion of the county; and Claybanks which included the county’s southern portion. Rapid growth characterized the area at this time as roads and bridges were being constructed and farm lands were being cleared. As growth continued, manageable governance of the developing County and its residents became a top priority.
The three large original townships were later divided into smaller governmental units. Greenwood and Elbridge Townships were formed in February 1858, Otto and Weare Townships in February 1860, Hart Township in December 1860, Golden Township in 1864, Crystal and Newfield Townships in 1865, Leavitt and Grant Townships in 1866, Shelby Township in 1867, Ferry Township in 1868, and finally the last of the sixteen present day townships was established with Colfax Township in 1869. At this point, county development was prevalent at all levels. Pentwater was incorporated as a village in 1867. It was the first incorporated village in Oceana County. The history of Oceana County is marked by the white settlers that came over from Europe and the Native Americans that already inhabited the area. The Native Americans played a vital role in the development of Oceana County.

In the late 1850's, the Ottawa Indians relocated from the Grand Rapids/Kent County area to Oceana County. This was the result of an agreement between the area tribes and lawmakers in Washington, D.C. The Ottawa Indians agreed to abandon their land on the Grand River in exchange for lands further north which they were to select. The land selected was in part what is today Elbridge and Crystal Township. The government built schools for the Native American population in these areas and monies were appropriated for livestock and tools.

Oceana County history is rich with the contributions of Native Americans to society. The great chief Cob-Moo-Sa was a respected orator, debater, and leader of people. Arguably the most famous Native American in Oceana County, he worked fervently to assure that the Ottawa tribe enjoyed the best quality of life possible. Cob-Moo-Sa is respected and revered many years after his death as evidenced by the memorial in his honor at Taylor Road and 144th Avenue in Elbridge Township. There is also a lake in Elbridge Township named for him.

Even with the contributions of Cob-Moo-Sa and his peers, cultural differences existed between the Ottawa tribe and the white settlers that caused conflicts in the relationship between these two groups. The notion of individual land ownership, for example, was one that was foreign to the American Indian, this along with the encroachment of white settlers, caused many to give up their land. Some stayed and continue to call Oceana County home while others moved on. Many descendants of the Ottawa tribe still return often to pay tribute to the rich history and culture of their ancestors, the Native American.

The development of certain facets of Oceana County speaks to the nature of how the area has evolved. Items such as infrastructure, health care, recreation and the resolve of the residents of Oceana County tell a great deal about what gives this special place character and makes it attractive to those who choose to call it home.

Early roads in the county were rough and undeveloped. “Two tracks” for wagon trains made it difficult for travel on the hilly terrain near Lake Michigan, especially in the cold cruel winters of West Michigan. The advent of the automobile changed everything by requiring that hard surface roads be built to support this growing mode of transportation. The first mile of hard surface road in Oceana County was built through a grant from the State of Michigan in 1906-1907. The project was funded at $1,000 per mile, was nine feet wide, and ran from the corner of the Methodist Church in Mears west one mile to Beebe’s Corners. The new road was so popular that the City of Hart and Golden Township soon constructed roads as well. Golden
Township's road was also one mile long and ran north from the Methodist Church in Mears.

The development of the automobile and roads to support it brought about many positive changes to the lifestyles of county residents including improving the access of all to basic health care. There are two hospitals in Oceana County that have enjoyed lengthy tenures as quality health care facilities. One of these facilities, Oceana Hospital, started in the 1920's in a small house on the corner of Courtland and Lincoln Streets in Hart. This location served as the home of the hospital until 1954 when the operation outgrew its original location. The location was moved to East Main Street in 1954. This facility closed as a hospital a number of years ago but now operates as an assisted care facility with medical offices. Oceana County also possesses a long-term care facility, known as the Medical Care Facility. The Medical Care Facility has 113 beds and also provides outpatient physical therapy.

The other facility of note in the county was originally known as Shelby Hospital. The hospital was established in 1922 by two nurses because of growing concern for health care in the village. A new building was built in 1925 to serve as the state of the art home of the hospital. Funds were raised through public clubs and donations by private interests. In 1928, control of the hospital was turned over from the original nurses to three doctors, two from Shelby and one from Ludington. The village acquired the hospital in 1938 and managed it through many changes including additions in 1948 and 1964 as well as a change to the name of the facility. Shelby Hospital became the Lakeshore Community Hospital in 1969. In keeping with the changing nature of health care, the village transferred ownership to a non-profit corporation in July of 1984 to preserve the best interests of area residents. An expansion of the facility was completed in 1998. The hospital has been a great source of pride to the residents of Shelby and Oceana County for many years with good reason.

When mentioning sources of pride for Oceana County, recreation has taken its place as an important sector of the county's development. Recreation in Oceana County appeals to people living in the county and visitors alike. Sandy beaches and dunes beckoned the earliest settlers of the area and continue to attract residents and tourists from far and near.

Carrie Mears, daughter of lumber baron Charles Mears, donated 25.19 acres of land to be designated as a State Park in the year 1919. This state park became known as Silver Lake State Park. Silver Lake was named so by Charles Mears who sometime in the 1880's threw a silver dollar into the lake and proclaimed "I christen thee Silver Lake." On December 13, 1920, the title for the donated land was given over to the State of Michigan to create Silver Lake State Park. Park development happened slowly after an additional 191.25 acres was transferred to the park in 1926 by the United States Commerce Department. Other changes to the park following the additional land grant included new concession area and caretaker living quarters added in 1927 and a boat livery and bait shop that was built in 1930. Growth leveled off at this point until after World War II when a master plan for the park was put in place. The development of cheaper automobile transportation, the proximity of the lake to the beautiful golden sand dunes, and a gain in the popularity of camping and outdoor recreation resulted in a boom of visitors to the area that started in the 1950's and continues to today. Today, many visitors come from all over the United States to visit the beautiful and scenic Silver Lake State Park which consists of approximately...
3,000 acres. Mears State Park, fourteen miles to the north of Pentwater was also established because of land donated by Carrie Mears in honor of her father Charles Mears.

The Double JJ Ranch located outside Rothbury, is a recreation area that attracts visitors from all over Michigan and the United States much like Silver Lake and Mears State Parks. The Ranch was formerly a Girl Scout Camp in the 1930's. Known primarily as a dude ranch for young singles in its early days, it is now a resort complete with an 18-Hole Championship Golf Course, Airfield and Riding Stable. The ranch is an attraction for singles, couples, and families alike who return year after year to enjoy the many resort amenities. The ranch recently received a grant from the Michigan Jobs Commission for further development of its properties. The resort has truly become an attraction that people will travel many miles to enjoy.

In September of 1986, Oceana County received a record seven to ten inches of rainfall between Tuesday, September 9 and late Thursday, September 11. The high amount of rain in a short period flooded much of the City of Hart and put too much pressure on the Hart Dam. The dam eventually collapsed causing a chain of events that caused a great deal of damage. The dam collapse meant that the swelling 250-acre Hart Lake emptied into the Pentwater River in a matter of a few hours. As lake emptied into the river, there was extensive damage to adjoining property including portions of backyards being eroded away, road being washed out, parking lots all but completely flooded, and trees snapped in half like twigs under the force of the rushing waters. The State Street Bridge at the downtown edge of the lake in Hart was all but destroyed, the bridges both northbound and southbound at US-31 and the Pentwater River were heavily damaged as well. Widespread flooding downstream was expected but property damage in Pentwater was minimal. Evacuations of residents close to threatened areas were undertaken for safety purposes, because of the quick thinking and actions of county residents, no one was seriously injured. The dam was rebuilt and soon after, life in Oceana County returned to normal. The events of the September's floods were so newsworthy, the Oceana Herald Journal called it the story of the decade.

*Portions of this section reprinted from the Oceana County Comprehensive Plan published in 2009.*

3. COMMUNITY DATA AND ANALYSIS

The following information provides a detailed description of the social, economic, physical and natural characteristics of Oceana County. It is important that this information be used as background data when making recreation-related decisions.

a. Demographics and Characteristics of the Population

The analysis of population and related factors helps to provide a clearer picture of the makeup of the community. These next sections will look closely at the population as primarily described in the 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing. The population of Oceana County plays an important role in determining the level of recreation services that should be available and the location of those services within the county.
i. Population Trends and Projections

Table 1 illustrates the comparison of the population of each minor civil division (MCD) in Oceana County. As can be seen, Grant Township, Hart Township and Shelby Township are the areas of Oceana County that are most populated.

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<td>1,583</td>
<td>1,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hart Township</td>
<td>1,525</td>
<td>1,801</td>
<td>1,513</td>
<td>2,026</td>
<td>2,065</td>
<td>2,282</td>
<td>2,476</td>
<td>2,686</td>
<td>2,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leavitt Township</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>1,069</td>
<td>1,159</td>
<td>1,258</td>
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<td>Newfield Township</td>
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<td>1,968</td>
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<td>2,529</td>
<td>2,805</td>
<td>3,043</td>
<td>3,301</td>
<td>3,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otto Township</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>1,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentwater Township</td>
<td>1,154</td>
<td>1,424</td>
<td>1,422</td>
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<td>1,504</td>
<td>1,666</td>
<td>1,807</td>
<td>1,961</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelby Township</td>
<td>3,352</td>
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<td>3,951</td>
<td>3,991</td>
<td>4,413</td>
<td>4,788</td>
<td>5,194</td>
<td>5,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weare Township</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td>1,261</td>
<td>1,312</td>
<td>1,446</td>
<td>1,569</td>
<td>1,702</td>
<td>1,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Hart</td>
<td>2,139</td>
<td>1,888</td>
<td>1,942</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>1,926</td>
<td>2,130</td>
<td>2,311</td>
<td>2,507</td>
<td>2,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesperia Village (part)</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C:\My Documents\recreation plan.doc 12
Oceana County has experienced cyclical population growth since 1970. A large population boom near 25% was realized in the years between 1970 and 1980 as the population increased from 17,894 persons to 22,002 persons. The ten-year surge of the 1970’s was followed by a leveling off between the years of 1980 and 1990. The population during the ten year period between 1980 and 1990 increased from 22,002 residents to 22,445 residents, or a total increase of 443 residents (Approximately 2%). Based on the latest information available from the U.S. Census Bureau, Oceana County’s population in 2000 is 26,873. Between the years of 1990 and 2000 Oceana County’s population has increased by 4,417 residents or 19.7%. If this population growth trend continues, the County will exceed the 25% population boom that was realized in the decade of the 1970’s.

Table 2 - Oceana County Population Projections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCEANA COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTIONS</th>
<th>1990 - 2025</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>22,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010**</td>
<td>2015**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,567</td>
<td>33,161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*U.S. Census Bureau estimate. **Projection by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC)
Source: WMSRDC and Bureau of the Census

Table 2 - Oceana County Population Projections 1990 - 2025, shows present and future population assumptions for Oceana County. According to the projections of the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, Oceana County’s population will continue to rise steadily over the next twenty years. These forecasts are based on recent trends on births, deaths, and migration rates in a particular area. The information regarding these variables is provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Internal Revenue Service, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Population forecasts further into the future are less reliable, but the farthest outreaching projection is for a total of 39,027 persons by the year 2025.
The projections are for further growth to a county-wide total of at least 34,827 by the year 2030.

When looking at these figures, it should be recognized that portions of the land in Oceana County are publicly owned by Townships, the County, the State of Michigan, and the United States Government and will probably not be developed in the near future or are unsuitable for development for various reasons. As a result, the developable area available in the County is reduced, and the true population density is somewhat higher than a straight calculation would indicate.

ii. Racial Characteristics

Table 3, Racial Composition of Oceana County, shows that the racial distribution within Oceana County over the past three decades has not varied significantly although people of Black, Indian, Asian, has decreased slightly since 1990. Although the population of other races is increasing, Oceana County’s population is not as diverse as the overall population makeup of the State of Michigan, even though the distribution is somewhat similar. Oceana County can be said to have quite a homogenous population as well over 9 out of 10 persons living in the county as of 2000 is white. Although the County’s population has increased since 1990, it is likely that the racial composition of Oceana County residents has not changed significantly during the last several years. It should be noted that Hispanic is not considered a race according to the Census Bureau; it is an ethnic background. A person of Hispanic decent is counted as either White, Black, Indian, Asian, or Other as their primary race. There is a separate category that distinguishes between those of Hispanic decent as opposed to those that are not of Hispanic decent within the Census. In 1990, there were 1,468 persons in Oceana County who considered themselves of Hispanic decent or 6.5 percent of the County population. In 2000 there were 2,119 persons who considered themselves of Hispanic decent or 8.6 percent of the County population.

Table 3 - Oceana County Racial Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>20,901 (95.0%)</td>
<td>21,062 (93.8%)</td>
<td>24,284 (90.4%)</td>
<td>(83.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>42 (0.2%)</td>
<td>67 (0.3%)</td>
<td>66 (0.3%)</td>
<td>(13.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian*</td>
<td>221 (1.0%)</td>
<td>284 (1.3%)</td>
<td>279 (1.3%)</td>
<td>(0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian**</td>
<td>33 (0.1%)</td>
<td>89 (0.4%)</td>
<td>167 (0.2%)</td>
<td>(1.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other***</td>
<td>805 (3.7%)</td>
<td>952 (4.2%)</td>
<td>2157 (8.0%)</td>
<td>(0.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>22,002</td>
<td>22,454</td>
<td>26,873</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indian includes persons of American Indian, Eskimo and Aleut descent.
**Asian includes persons of Asian and Pacific Islander descent.
***Other includes persons not included in any other category.


iii. Age Distribution

It is useful to note an increase or decrease in certain population groups, specifically the school age and the retirement age populations. These population groups can indicate whether there is an increased need for recreation services that cater to school age children or senior citizens. Historically, these two groups have the most specialized recreational needs.
As can be seen by the following table and figures, two indices are significant when analyzing population trends. The first is age distribution. In Oceana County, the pattern of age distribution have varied somewhat over the last twenty years. As Table 4, Age Distribution: Oceana County 1980-2000 shows, there are a few age groups within the County with a substantial number of persons in them and those groups have changed over time. The 1980 Census showed a young Oceana County with the population concentrated in the 10-14 and 15-19 cohorts. With a slight change, the 1990 Census still shows a young population. Ten years later, in 2000 the 10-14 and 15-19 cohorts again had the highest population concentrations. A slight surprise in the data is the 25-34 cohort. It would be natural for that cohort to remain a significant portion of the population, however, a steady decrease is seen from 1980-2000. This can be partially attributed to this cohort being among the most mobile age group. There may be other reasons for this that are specific to Oceana County. It can also be related to patterns of out-migration associated with rural areas. These are the college graduate, young family group, that are not being retained due to the lack of good wages. Jobs that used to be plentiful in the northwest and Midwest U.S. (Rustbelt) were being reduced while jobs in the south and western U.S. (Sunbelt) became more plentiful. Many migrated from the rustbelt to the sunbelt to enjoy the prosperity of new (and often higher paying) employment opportunities.

The years between the 1990 and 2000 Census reports showed an overall population increase. There were a high number of persons in the 10-14 and the 15-19 cohorts in 2000. It seems the trend is a substantial increase in the 45-54 and the 65-74 cohorts. In the cohorts ranging from 25-49, there are significant increases in the number of persons both ranging from 1980 to 1990 and from 1990 to 2000. This may be explained by a reverse of the earlier trend that was discussed here. Those individuals that may have left the County to pursue other opportunities return to enjoy the relaxed lifestyle and abundant natural resources that Oceana County has to offer and to retire here. The small increase in population overall in the County between 1980 and 1990 could also be attributed to a decrease in fertility as people are having less children than they were during the Baby Boom following World War II. More families are relying on double-income households with more women entering the labor force. National trends support these events taking place as families in the U.S. are having fewer children and the population in many areas continues to level off.

In Oceana County in 2000, the age groups containing the most people include 10-14 and 15-19 year-olds. The County’s distribution seems to indicate that the largest age group is school-age children and there is the potential for more pupils in the near future, especially with a continuing migration into the community among young family age groups of 35-44 year-olds. The in-migration of persons after the age of 25 can be seen most clearly by observing what has happened over the last twenty years to the 25-34 cohort. In 1980 the 25-34 year-olds numbered 3,076. Twenty years later in 2000 that cohort, now 45-54 years-old, consisted of 3,633 persons, a significant increase.

Based on this data, it can be assumed that there is a large population of school children in the County. Individuals between the ages of 5-14 make up 22 percent of the total county population. The needs of those children must be considered as future recreation decisions are made. Following the school-age cohorts, the largest population segments in Oceana County are the 35-44 year-olds and the 45-54 year-olds. The increase in population of older cohorts shows how Oceana County’s population is aging. Through natural progression, there are more residents in the
County living longer and this trend shows no signs of reversing itself. The needs of these cohorts must also be monitored as future recreation development is considered.

There is a larger increase in the "retired" age group because Oceana County is a desirable and attractive place to live. An aging population requires different amenities than a younger population however. This trend will have a large impact on future recreation plans in Oceana County.

Table 4 - Oceana County Age Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>1,806</td>
<td>1,767</td>
<td>1,733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>1,846</td>
<td>1,990</td>
<td>2,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>2,002</td>
<td>1,825</td>
<td>2,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>2,247</td>
<td>1,637</td>
<td>2,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>1,559</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>1,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>3,076</td>
<td>3,339</td>
<td>2,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>2,454</td>
<td>3,212</td>
<td>4,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>2,140</td>
<td>2,915</td>
<td>3,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>1,120</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>1,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>1,054</td>
<td>1,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>1,035</td>
<td>1,064</td>
<td>1,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>1,682</td>
<td>1,864</td>
<td>2,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>1,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>22,002</td>
<td>22,455</td>
<td>26,873</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Also of significance is the information contained in Table 5, Median Age of Oceana County and Selected Areas. An unexpected rapidly increasing median age is indicative of an influx of older citizens, or an outflow of school age children. Decreasing median age could be attributed to a "baby boom" type of phenomena or an increase in younger residents moving to an area such as a college town enjoying sharp enrollment increases. A gradually increasing median age could be explained simply by an aging population. Due to a number of factors including technological advances in fighting sickness and disease, people are living longer. This gradual median age increase seems to be the case with all selected areas highlighted in Table 5 including Oceana County. Oceana and its surrounding areas have median ages similar to that of the State of Michigan as a whole.
Table 5 - Median Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oceana</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskegon</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newaygo</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Michigan</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As Table 6, 1990 Oceana County Population By Sex shows, Oceana County is very well balanced between males and females. This is reflective of a stable population. The fact that the largest age groups in the County are either school-age children or those individuals approaching retirement forewarns that these age groups have the potential to have a great impact on the county’s future. To account for this trend, the recreation needs of these age groups should be given special consideration.

Table 6 - 1990 Oceana County Population by Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oceana County</td>
<td>13,544</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>13,329</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


b. Income Distribution

Table 7, Per Capita Income: Oceana County and Selected Areas, illustrates Oceana County’s per capita income (PCI) and how it compares with surrounding counties and the State of Michigan. The figures show how Oceana has lagged behind other surrounding counties as well as the State averages in terms of per capita income. Oceana County’s 1999 PCI trailed its neighbor to the south, Muskegon County, by $2,089 or 13 percent. Further, Oceana County’s 1999 PCI was $6,290 below that of the state’s or 39.6 percent lower than the State of Michigan. Many conclusions can be drawn from this factor including the Oceana County residents may not have as much disposable income that can be spent on recreation-related pursuits compared to other areas of the region or the state. Further, the lack of available resources shows that there is definitely a need for grant assistance to the county. County officials, it seems, have taken these factors into consideration when determining future recreation needs and policies regarding the accessibility of county facilities. All county facilities are open to all residents at no cost. It has been determined that this policy allows for equitable access to all county residents (and non-residents) regardless of income level, age, or any other socio-economic factor.

For example, any fee-based facility would probably not receive widespread support unless the fee was levied against only those who use a facility that are not County residents. A policy like this may discourage tourists from coming to the area which may directly hurt the amount of outside dollars being spent in the county. This “resident-nonresident” fee structure is being utilized in other local and county facilities in Michigan with mixed results. It is advised here that such a policy would not be favorable to Oceana County.
Table 7 - Per Capita Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1979</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oceana</td>
<td>$5,627</td>
<td>$9,582</td>
<td>$15,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskegon</td>
<td>$6,358</td>
<td>$11,345</td>
<td>$17,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newaygo</td>
<td>$5,696</td>
<td>$10,307</td>
<td>$16,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>$6,192</td>
<td>$10,848</td>
<td>$17,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Michigan</td>
<td>$11,696</td>
<td>$14,154</td>
<td>$22,168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Local Economy and Employment

Oceana County's economic conditions are predicated on its two biggest staples, agriculture and tourism. The tourism facet is bolstered by the attraction of many residents from outside the county to the Local, County and State Parks. Oceana County's Tourism organizations are very active in advertising the County as a recreation destination. Oceana County has high recognition related to agriculture as well. The County is a leading producer of fruits and vegetables, most notably asparagus and cherries. These two main areas of economic activity provide spin-off in the form of many other services and other indirectly related industry. Because of the relative proximity of the urban areas of Muskegon County, some residents choose to relocate to the pristine areas of Oceana County and commute to the "city." As of 2000, approximately 55 percent of Oceana County's workers (14,450 total workers) work in Oceana County (2000 Regional Economic Information System). Of those not working in Oceana County, approximately 25 percent are employed in Muskegon County, 5 percent in Mason County, 8 percent in Newaygo County, and 7 percent in other counties. This information is based on place of residence information for those persons living in Oceana County.

According to the Regional Economic Information System, Oceana County is very similar to the rest of the five-county region in that the service sector employs the most people in the county, 18 percent, for 1999. Following close behind is retail employing about 16 percent and government employing about 14 percent of those working in Oceana County. The manufacturing sector employs 13 percent. In general terms, about 4 out of 5 persons employed in Oceana County is employed in one of the previously mentioned sectors. The other one out of five works in one of the following sectors including construction, transportation, wholesale, and financial/investment/real estate. Compared with 1990, service and retail employment is on the rise with government employment remaining steady. This information is based on place of work and takes into account all persons working in Oceana County regardless of their place of residence.

The number of unemployed has risen dramatically in the past few years. The 2000 Census shows a 6.9% unemployment rate, which is now at 20% and appears to still be on the increase. This is in part due to the poor economic conditions of the entire state at this time. The concern is whether the County economy is diverse enough to support a long term rate of high unemployment.
Oceana County showed a slight decrease in poverty rate from 1990 to 2000. If we take into account the 3,000 – 4,000 migrant labor force, many of whom are “settling out” now, this figure will probably change significantly. An increased median age (beyond middle age) is associated with increased rates of poverty in many rural communities; and as the population chart indicates, there is a large increase in the number of 65 and older population.

Travel time to work is another indicator of future employment trends. The largest sectors of commuters in Oceana County are those workers that are traveling less than twenty minutes to work or those that work at home (55 percent of the total workforce). There is also a large sector of workers traveling between 20 and 39 minutes to work (38 percent of the total workforce). This information from the 2000 U.S. Census would support the theory that those 38 percent of individuals are probably not working in Oceana County and are probably working in adjacent counties.

d. Transportation

The transportation system is often described as the physical and operational infrastructure which accomplishes the movement of people and goods from place to place. Transportation systems are broken into a number of subsystems known as modes (such as highway, rail, air pedestrian, waterborne, biking, etc.) and involve different types of vehicles and routes.

Like many rural and suburban areas, the primary mode of transportation in Oceana County is vehicular traffic (Map 2). For ease of planning, engineering, maintenance, and funding, roadways are classified according to their function. The following is a list of basic roadway classifications:

**Highways:** Move large numbers of people and vehicles long distances at high speeds and volumes.

**County Arterials:** Similar to highways except that they have lower speeds and volumes and cover shorter distances.

**Local Roads:** Provide access to resources, farms and residences for short distances at low speeds.

Oceana County has one U.S. highway route, US-31, and two State roadways, M-20 and M-120. US-31 also has two business routes off of the main highway designed to facilitate travel into commercial and industrial areas. US-31 serves as the main north-south corridor through the County and links Oceana County with other urban, rural, and suburban areas along Lake Michigan. M-20 is an east-west corridor that runs through the southern part of the county. M-20 eventually links up M-37 and US-131, which are two major north-south routes through the State. M-120 proceeds between the southeastern corner of the county and the Village of Hesperia. **Table 8, Oceana County Traffic Counts on U.S. - and State M - Routes**, gives vehicle traffic information on the most heavily traveled roads in Oceana County.
In Oceana County, transportation has played a role in where development takes place. Most of the industrial and commercial development requires access to good roads to maximize commerce. Hence, this type of development has aligned itself with the US-31 and Oceana Drive (Business Route 31) areas. The importance of farming and agriculture in the County means road maintenance for shipping and movement of goods is also very important. The success of these sectors of the economy are very much reliant on the condition of the road network.

Table 8 - Oceana County Traffic Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCEANA COUNTY TRAFFIC COUNTS** ON U.S. AND STATE (M) ROUTES</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 31 between the Muskegon/Oceana County Line and Rothbury</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>12,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 31 between Rothbury and New Era</td>
<td>8,900</td>
<td>11,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 31 between New Era and Shelby</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>11,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 31 between Shelby and Hart</td>
<td>8,300</td>
<td>9,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 31 between Hart and Pentwater</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>8,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 31 between Pentwater and the Oceana/Mason County Line</td>
<td>6,800</td>
<td>8,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR-31 between U.S. 31 and Pentwater</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>2,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR-31 between Pentwater and U.S. 31</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>3,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-20 east of New Era</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-20 west of Hesperia</td>
<td>3,300</td>
<td>3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-120 at convergence of Oceana/Newaygo/Muskegon Counties</td>
<td>6,800</td>
<td>N. 5,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S. 6,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E. 6,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** The counts listed here are Annual Average 24-Hour Traffic Volumes prepared by the Michigan Department of Transportation in conjunction with the United States Department of Transportation-Federal Highway Administration.

Due to the popularity of off-road vehicles in Oceana County, especially at the Silver Lake State Park and other dune areas, county officials should continue to monitor the usage of these vehicles. This mode of transportation plays an important role in the County’s economy. Even though off-road vehicles are important, a fine line must be tread relating the importance of this segment of recreation with the rights of County residents. The impact of these vehicles on the environmental quality of the fragile dune areas must also be closely watched.
Oceana County Transportation – map 2
e. Natural Features

The natural features of Oceana County's environment are important factors in the planning process because they aid in determining the land's suitability for recreational development. Natural features are often cited as being one of the important reasons people choose to live in the rural and small-town areas of Oceana County. These features are important because they significantly contribute to a positive quality of life for residents. But these enticing natural features can be damaged or lost if not managed properly.

i. Climate

Due to its proximity to Lake Michigan, Oceana County experiences unique climate conditions. Lake Michigan has a moderating effect on the climate. For instance, summers are cooler and winters are milder along the lakeshore than they are inland. The difference is noticeable when comparing average daily temperatures between the cities of Muskegon, located along the lakeshore, and Hart, approximately 5-10 miles inland. These two cities are used for comparison because they are the closest areas to Oceana County that data was available. The data for the two cities illustrates that during the months of June and August, Hart experiences between a two and three degree higher average daily maximum temperature than Muskegon. Strangely enough, Muskegon is warmer in July. During the year, the City of Hart experiences between a one and two degree higher daily maximum temperature than Muskegon. In terms of average daily minimum temperatures, Muskegon's are higher across the board for the entire year than those temperatures reported for Hart. These climatic differences are illustrated in Tables 9 and 10. The data reflects normal's based upon the 1961-1990 record period of the National Climatic Data Center for the City of Muskegon and 1961-1980 for the City of Hart, Michigan.

The presence of Lake Michigan also causes a climatic phenomenon known as "lake effect" snow. As cold air passes over Lake Michigan's warm water, the air is warmed and gains moisture from lake evaporation. The warmed, moisture-laden air rises, forms clouds, and produces snow along the colder shoreline of Lake Michigan as far as 40 miles inland. Climatologists have identified a snowbelt along the lakeshore counties especially the counties of Muskegon, Ottawa, Allegan, and Van Buren whose average seasonal snow fall is over 90 inches (Eichenlaub 177). Oceana County experiences this phenomena as well but to a somewhat lesser degree.

Michigan's winter climate is dominated by cold Continental polar or milder Pacific air masses. They are fairly dry air masses because they have either formed over a landmass or have lost moisture due to orthographic uplift. On occasion, tropical air masses dominate Michigan's summer climate. Tropical air masses are moist and account for Michigan's humid summer weather (Eichenlaub 4). Oceana County's climate is further shaped by the presence of Lake Michigan. When the prevailing westerly winds cross Lake Michigan, Oceana County's climate has semi-marine modifications to it. Marine climates are characterized by milder temperatures, increased precipitation, and higher and more sustained wind speeds. The aforementioned modifications are the "lake effects" that Oceana County residents are probably familiar with.
Precipitation is fairly well distributed throughout the year. The growing season, May through September, receives an average of 3.11 inches per month as reported for the City of Hart. August and September are the wettest month with 3.39 and 3.36 inches of precipitation, respectively. February is the driest month in Hart with 1.79 inches of precipitation reported. The highest temperature recorded in Hart was 104 degrees Fahrenheit on July 13, 1936.

Table 9 - Climatic Data – Muskegon, Michigan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY OF MUSKEGON CLIMATIC DATA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normals for 1961-1990</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature Data</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Nov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Maximum (°F)</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Minimum (°F)</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precipitation Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Total (Water equivalent in inches)</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. 1995 Local Climatological Data; Annual Summary with Comparative Data, Muskegon, Michigan.

Table 10 - Climatic Data – Hart, Michigan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY OF HART CLIMATIC DATA</th>
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<tr>
<td>Temperature Data</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Nov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Maximum (°F)</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Minimum (°F)</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>50.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Precipitation Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Total (Water equivalent in inches)</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


ii. Topography

The topography of Oceana County is the result of complex glacial processes. The Wisconsin glacial ice sheet, and more specifically its Lake Michigan Lobe, covered the western portion of Michigan approximately 8 to 12 thousand years ago. This topography is quite varied because of a number of natural features that are present in the County. The most prominent of these features (and probably the most well-known) are the dune formations located in the western part of the County near Lake Michigan. These fragile and sensitive areas are particularly important to the overall economy because of their relationship to tourism. These areas should be closely monitored because of their relative importance to the county. Inland topography has a rolling characteristic as a portion of a major moraine is located in the county. The retreat and subsequent activity...
of the most previous glacial action is responsible for the relatively large amount of relief both from east to west and north to south.

Any alterations to the natural topography affects natural drainage systems, therefore where possible, all development should integrate the natural topography to reduce costly storm water management systems and construction methods to control drainage and sedimentation.

iii. Water Features

Oceana County has several surface water features, including four major rivers and 65 lakes. The three largest inland lakes in the County are Silver Lake, Pentwater Lake and Stony Lake. The major rivers include the North and south branches of the Pentwater River and the North and South branches of the White River. The North Branch of the Pentwater River flows southwesterly through Weare Township and empties into Pentwater Lake. The south branch of the Pentwater River flows northwesterly through Elbridge and Hart Townships and empties into the North Branch of the Pentwater River. The North Branch of the White River flows in a southwesterly direction through Newfield, Ferry, Otto Townships and into the South Branch of the White River. The South Branch of the White River flows in a southwest direction from Hesperia through Greenwood Township and into Muskegon County.

Harmful materials from roads, lawn care chemicals, farms, and residential sewage can pollute surface runoff within the drainage basins of both rivers. In addition, siltation and eutrophication are harmful effects of erosion and polluted runoff that also impact waterways. In 1975, the Natural Resources Commission designated portions of the White River and its tributaries as a Country-Scenic River in accordance with the Natural River Act (Public Act 231 of 1970). Country-Scenic Rivers are defined as rivers in an agricultural setting with pastoral borders and a few readily accessible homes. The Natural River Act of 1970 is intended to identify rivers that need their natural qualities protected from unwise use and development (Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Natural Rivers Program).

Currently, there is a special Pentwater River Watershed program that is coordinated with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The program is a collaboration between the Oceana County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Grand Valley State University's Water Resources Institute, and the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission. The project has significant linkages to local governments so that local land use decisions will take the best interest of the river and its environs into account.

Beyond rivers, lakes and creeks, Oceana County has many miles of County drains. These drains help to handle additional water run-off in areas where soils may not be conducive to faster absorption. The drains are monitored by the office of the Oceana County Drain Commissioner.

iv. Soils

For the majority of rural Michigan, soil, and the type of development it allows or restricts, is a key factor in determining where recreation and recreation facilities development will occur. The suitability of soils for roads, foundations, wells, and septic systems is critical in determining the location and intensity of development. Various soil characteristics
such as depth, permeability, wetness, shrink-swell potential, erosion potential, slope, and weight-bearing capacity are all factors that make a soil suitable or unsuitable for a given use. Often, the soil characteristics that create development limitations can be overcome by appropriate design and management.

Soil surveys assist in determining the extent of flood prone areas, access to aquifers, erosion and sedimentation potential, ability to site septic tanks and absorption fields, and the limitations for construction. Soil information is important in the planning process because it can graphically depict areas which should or should not be developed in a particular manner based upon the soil's suitability. In some cases, mitigation measures can be used to alleviate some or all of the limitations for a particular soil type. However, these measures are often costly, both to the developer/owner, and to society at large (via the natural environment). Therefore, soil maps often become an important guide for siting future development, including that which is recreational in nature.

There are eleven major soil groupings associated with Oceana County according to the Soil Survey of Oceana County, Michigan and the Oceana County Comprehensive Plan. Of these 11, five overall types have been identified for analysis.

Areas of Nearly Level to Very Steep, Moderately Well Drained to Excessively Drained Soils and Areas of Dune Land. This makes up about 6 percent of the County. These areas are used as woodland. Erosion hazard and seedling mortality are major management concerns. These soils are generally unsuited to cropland and are poorly suited or unsuited to pasture.

Areas of Nearly Level to Very Steep, Excessively Drained, Moderately Well Drained, and Poorly Drained Soils. These areas make up about 23 percent of the County. These areas are used as woodland. Erosion hazard, hazard of windthrow, and seedling mortality are the major management concerns. Some of the soils are suitable as cropland. If cultivated crops are grown, the major management concerns are soil blowing, water erosion, and seasonal wetness.

Areas of Nearly Level to Very Steep, Excessively Drained and Well Drained Soils. These areas make up about 60 percent of the county. These soils are suited to cropland and orchards. Water erosion, a low content of organic matter, a limited available water capacity, seasonal wetness, and land slope are the major management concerns. If the soils are used as woodland, seedling mortality is the major management concern. The erosion hazard is also a management concern in the rolling to very steep areas.

Areas of Nearly Level to Steep, Well Drained and Somewhat Poorly Drained, and Very Poorly Drained Soils. These areas make up about 7 percent of the county. These soils are used as cropland. Soil blowing, water erosion, seasonal wetness, compaction, and land slope are the major management concerns. If the soils are used as woodlands, the hazard of windthrow and seedling mortality are the major management concerns.

Areas of Nearly Level, Very Poorly Drained, and Poorly Drained Soils. This combination accounts for about 4 percent of the county. These soils are used as woodland. Seedling mortality and the hazard of windthrow are the major management concerns.
Oceana County has predominantly sandy soils, which is characteristic of those West Michigan Areas that are adjacent to or near Lake Michigan. Prime farmland in the County is prevalent. As agriculture continues to be a major facet of the County’s economy, these prime farmland areas should be preserved. This should dictate that development be directed elsewhere within the County.

f. County Government

Oceana County is governed by an elected County Board of Commissioners consisting of seven members that are elected to two year terms. The county board meets regularly on the second and forth Thursdays of the month at 2:00 P.M. Special meetings are scheduled periodically when circumstances warrant.

Currently, there is a ten member Parks and Recreation Commission that discusses and makes decision related to recreation issues. The Commission, which was created as a result of Michigan Public Act 261 of 1965 on August 26, 1968, has an annual budget and is responsible for the upkeep and general day-to-day functions of the County Parks system. This Commission receives direction from the County Board (as a result of their representation on the Parks and Recreation Commission) but acts as an autonomous unit. The by-laws of the Commission dictate that certain members must be appointed from other County departments including the County Board of Commissioners, the County Planning Commission, the County Drain Commission, and the County Road Commission. Those members that are not affiliated with a County department are at-large members each serving staggered three year terms.

The Parks and Recreation Commission has a limited annual budget of $35,000, however there are many volunteers who work with the Commission on new projects and to keep our parks clean. The Commission members also donate many hours of their time working on projects in Oceana County parks.
4. RECREATION ANALYSIS

a. Recreation Standards

The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission’s main goal is the operation of the current County parks system. The main focus is on facilities, therefore, little programming information is necessary to evaluate how the Commission is filling the need for parks facilities.

Table 11- Recreation Facility Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECREATION FACILITY STANDARDS</th>
<th>Number of Units per Population</th>
<th>Number in Oceana County</th>
<th>Deficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trails</td>
<td>1 System per Region</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>6-10 acres per 1,000</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines from the National Recreation and Park Association

In terms of recreation facilities, Table 11 should serve as a guide to future development. In terms of the Oceana County Park system, there seems to be an adequate amount of parkland based on industry guidelines. The Hart-Montague Bicycle Trail State Park is a jewel in the crown of Oceana County. There are few counties in the United States that have a population of 26,000 residents and possess such a significant trail. The residents of the County are blessed to have such a beautiful and functional facility. In terms of park spaces, the National Recreation and Park Association standards recommend six to ten acres of developed open space/park land per 1,000 residents. That would mean approximately 152 to 260 acres for the 26,000+ residents of Oceana County. While all of the acreage in Oceana County is not fully developed, it can be said that all lands are accessible to the public. The 194 acres mentioned in Table 11 is just County park facilities, it does not include State, City or Township Parks, or Federal areas which in total number in the thousands of acres as well. Based on this, the County is definitely not deficient in the area of parks/open space available to residents. The County is, however, deficient in land adjacent to or with access to Lake Michigan that can be used at no cost to users. Access to the approximately 26 miles of Lake Michigan lakeshore is a top priority of residents and county officials alike so that all can and will have orderly and affordable access to the beauty of Lake Michigan.

b. Recreation Facility Inventory

All existing recreation facilities in Oceana County were inventoried to give a broad perspective of the opportunities that residents have to choose from. This section is designed to give direction and provide information to the recreation decision-makers in Oceana County. The facilities have been numbered (reference number in parenthesis) and listed on Map 3- Oceana County Base Map and Recreation Facilities.
i. County Parks

**Black Lake County Park (1)**, located on one hundred acres in Colfax Township, provides a campground facility. Housing approximately fifteen sites, campers are charged $10 per night to stay in the facility. Campsites are located very close to the water which affords campers an area to fish, swim, or boat. There is a hand pump for water and Port-A-John service at this rustic camping area. There is a full time caretaker at the facility who also collects the fees from campers. The campground makes up a very small percentage of the total land area of the park but the Parks and Recreation Commission has discussed enlarging the camping area and adding more amenities. In 2008 the Parks and Recreation Commission contracted Wilson Forestry to write a Forest Management Plan for this park to insure its ecological, economic, recreational and aesthetic benefits now and well into the future.

**Cedar Point County Park (2)**, located on the border of Golden and Pentwater Townships, is approximately 2.5 acres in size and provides direct access to Lake Michigan in the form of a sandy beach. The beach itself provides approximately 133 feet of frontage. Enjoying mostly seasonal use, the park receives heavy usage during busy summer times in the form of swimmers and picnickers. There is paved parking area. There are stairs that lead from the parking area to the beach. Port-A-John service is provided.

**Crystal Valley County Park (3)**, located in Crystal Township, is a multi-purpose recreation area consuming approximately 10 acres. The park has numerous unique natural features traversing it including Crystal Creek which is dammed near the back of the park property at Crystal Valley Pond. The pond provides swimming, fishing, and boating possibilities, however, the pond is relatively shallow. In 2007 Oceana County received a grant to totally upgrade this park. The park includes a new tennis/basketball court, a softball/baseball diamond which receives steady summer use, foot trails, several picnic areas, including a covered pavilion, a paved walk along the pond to a new fishing deck next to the dam. There are new vault toilets that are handicapped accessible, a new well and irrigation system, a fenced playground with new equipment for small children and a larger playground for the older children. Soccer goals were also installed. This park is most probably one of the County's most heavily used parks.

**Doolittle County Park (4)**, is the newest County park, consisting of forty acres located near Gales Pond in Elbridge Township. The park is being used for hiking and natural trails currently. The facility is new. A Sign was posted, a picnic table built and placed there, a trail was blazed and natural features marked by Eagle Scouts in 2008. It is anticipated that this park will continue to be used for trails and passive recreation. The 2008 Forest Management Plan includes this park.

**Oceana County Mill Pond Park (5)**, located in Ferry Township, is located along the north branch of the White River. This eight acre facility is mostly undeveloped except for some picnic areas and cooking grills. The park is used for fishing and swimming and there is a considerable amount of open space for hiking and observing nature. In 2008 the County Road Commission constructed a new, widened bridge across the White River at the site of this park. This cleared and opened it up for less isolation, making it a much more inviting park. Plans are to do some major work along the River and upgrades to the park. Volunteers have been clearing brush and cleaning this park.
**Gales Pond County Park** (6), located in Elbridge Township, consists of just under nineteen acres. The park has a 2,500-foot boardwalk that was constructed with the aid of a DNR Grant. It extends across the pond and links up with other nature/foot trails that weave along the pond and to the back portion of the property. The boardwalk is handicap accessible. There is a pamphlet available that describes some of the natural features of the trail. There are a couple of picnic tables near the undeveloped parking area. Even though the pond area is dammed, it appears to be shrinking as water levels are lower than they have been in the past. The Parks and Recreation Commission is considering cost effective ways to fix the dam and preserve this pond. There is a sign that marks the entrance of the park area. This park is used extensively by teachers and school children for science/field trips. This park is also included in the 2008 Forest Management Plan.

**Marshville Dam County Park** (7), an undeveloped park area in Benona Township, ranges over approximately ten acres. This beautiful park area is used mostly for fishing and hiking. Overnight camping is not allowed at this park. Because of the remote nature of this park it has been left undeveloped and in its natural state. The Parks and Recreation Commission has included it in the County’s new Forest Management Plan and has not made any substantial investment in this area so far.

**Stony Lake County Park** (8), primarily a lake access park in Claybanks Township, spans approximately eight acres. There is a 1/4-mile access road that leads to a boat ramp which is installed for seasonal use. The access road splits at the top of the hill overlooking the lake. There are some picnic facilities on the hill as well as a Port-a-Potty. The road gets especially steep as it descends to the lake. Although there is no beach, swimming in this area is favorable, although on high traffic boat days, probably not altogether safe. The ramp area could be used for fishing as well. The park is adjoined to Stony Lake Lutheran Bible Camp.

ii. Other Facilities

Other park and recreation facilities in Oceana County that are not managed by the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission are listed here for reference.

**Township/Local Parks**

**Acker Lake Park** (9), a boat launch and campground area, is located in Greenwood Township.

**Benona Township Park** (10), located on approximately three acres in Benona Township, offers picnic area, playground equipment, baseball/softball diamond, restrooms, and water access.

**Campbell Lake Township Park** (11), located on less than an acre on the border between Leavitt and Newfield Townships, offers a primitive launch area for boats and canoes. The bathroom facilities and hand pump have fallen into disrepair at this facility.

**Claybanks Township Park** (12), two township parks spanning over 80 acres, is known for its camping facilities. The camping facilities are good with picnic tables, grills, fire pits, and a hand pump. This park also has a lovely Lake Michigan beach area. The park serves as a park for local residents as well as an overflow area for Silver Lake State Park.
Colfax Township Park (13), a small facility with beach access and swim area, is located north of Walkerville. The park is located on School Section Lake and has Port-A-John service. There is a private campground across the street from the park which makes it a convenient area for local use.

Gurney Park (14), located on approximately 15 acres in Hart, is used for many recreation pursuits including baseball, softball, and tennis. The park also offers camping and picnic areas. There are areas to boat and fish as well as a lovely beach and swimming area off of Hart Lake. Toilet and shower facilities are also available at this very popular site.

Newfield Township Park (15), a small access point off of Hightower Lake, is used mainly as a primitive boat launch. The park is located off of the west side of the lake.

Round Lake Park (16), located about 1.5 miles north of Mears, is a small park used mainly for picnicking and fishing. There is no beach area but the park is used for fishing.

Golden Twp. Park (23), located in sec. 36 of Golden Twp, provides Lake Michigan beachfront and channel access. There is paved parking and port-a-johns. The park is mainly used as a swimming beach.

There are small local community parks in Rothbury (17), Walkerville (18), and Hesperia (19) all with playground equipment, play areas, and varying degrees of court spaces.

iii. State/National Parks

Mears State Park (20), located on Lake Michigan in the Village of Pentwater, is a State Park used year-round and heavily attended. There is a beach and swim area, hiking trails, concession area, and picnic area. The camping facilities are heavily used as well and are in very good condition. This park draws local people as well as those from far away because of the beautiful facilities and amenities.

Pines Point National Forest Campground (21), located in the southeast corner of Oceana County, is a large park used for camping, canoeing, and fishing. There is access to the White River and an interpretive nature trail. There is a picnic area and toilet facilities in the park. Those wishing to utilize this area pay a minimum cost to do so.

Silver Lake State Park (22), spanning almost 3,000 acres, contains many amenities for recreation. Camping is a major draw attracting many tourists to both the primitive camping area and the general use sites. A large area has been set aside for off-road vehicles and private tours. There is a designated swimming area and large rolling dunes. There has been considerable development around the Park area which adds to the draw of the area but causes problems as well (most significantly traffic tie-ups during peak tourist times.)
Little Point Sauble State Park (24), located Southwest of Silver Lake, includes the lighthouse, beautiful Lake Michigan beach frontage, restroom facilities and a large parking lot.

There is also a State Public Access Site on Crystal Lake for boat launching and loading and a Marina in Pentwater that is operated under the jurisdiction of the State of Michigan which has picnic area and restroom facilities. There is a State public access site on McLaren Lake for boat launching, which includes a large parking lot.

Hart-Montague Bicycle Trail is a State Park facility. It is the abandoned railroad right-of-way that runs from Hart through Shelby and New Era to Northern Muskegon County. The trail is paved and is used by walkers, bicyclists, and in the winter by snowmobiles.
5. ACTION PROGRAM

a. Goals, Objectives and Implementation Steps

The identification of key issues is a critical part of any planning process. It is through the identification of these community issues that goals and objectives are developed, thereby clarifying, organizing, and prioritizing the present and future tasks to be accomplished.

Goals are broad, long-range statements reflecting a general attitude or policy intent of the County. They are often visionary. Objectives specify the courses of action that should be taken to accomplish the goals, and are short-range and measurable. Implementation strategies are specific courses of action and assignments of responsibility laid out to provide accountability for the accomplishment of the goals and objectives.

As discussed earlier, the key issues, goals, objectives, and implementation strategies related to recreation in Oceana County were formulated through input gathered from two public work sessions called Town Meetings and subsequent discussions with the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission. These goals and objectives should be implemented and monitored based on their feasibility, effectiveness, and context within the recreation plans for Oceana County. The status of these goals and objectives should be reviewed on a regular basis, and when appropriate, the Plan should be modified to reflect changes of a physical nature or those of general public sentiment. This comprehensive process should be repeated on a regular basis to ensure an accurate and timely reflection of the needs and desires of the citizens.

Some items to note under the Goals, Objectives and Implementation Strategies section:

- The Oceana County Recreation Plan will be referred to as "the Plan".
- Items with roman numeric headings (i, ii, iii...) are considered goals.
- Items with bullet headings are considered objectives.
- Items with diamond headings are considered implementation strategies.
- The goals, objectives, and implementation strategies are listed in no particular order.

i. Increase recreation opportunities for all Oceana County residents.

- Parkland, park facilities, and recreation opportunities will be provided and explored that promote use, safety and access for all Oceana County residents regardless of age, race, income or physical or mental capacity.
  - Parkland and recreation-related projects developed as a result of this plan will comply with access requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.
The Oceana County Park and Recreation Commission will continue to coordinate park programs and serve to keep duplication of efforts to a minimum to serve all County residents.

- Identify means by which resources can be leveraged to increase recreation opportunities for residents of Oceana County. Work in conjunction with local, county, regional, state and federal programs to identify areas of need.

- The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission will work to leverage parks and recreation funding through local, state, and federal grants and allocations from the County Board of Commissioners.

- The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission will continue to network with school agencies, campgrounds, and other recreation providers to increase the level of recreation services available to county residents where applicable.

- Other groups, boards, associations, or individuals may also be identified as future partners for recreation site or facility development including current landowners that may donate or lease property to Oceana County.

ii. The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission will look to focus possible development on a limited type and number of projects.

- The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission will focus on projects related to new park facilities or the addition or expansion to existing County park facilities.

- The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission supports the development of a new senior play park in close proximity to senior housing developments.

- The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission will focus on projects related to creek and waterway development specifically additions or upgrades to our existing park facilities.

- The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission will continue to support projects related to bike and pedestrian trails especially those that may link up with current County facilities.

- The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission will continue to support the Mason/Oceana County Lakeshore Snowmobile Club’s efforts of having groomed snowmobile trails in Oceana County.
b. Capital Improvement Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Funding/Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Acquire additional park from DNR at White River in Newfield Twp.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$15,000 MNRTF $5,000 Local Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Mill Pond Park improvements including boardwalk, playground equip., nature trail, picnic pavilion, lights, tennis court, fishing</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
<td>$41,000 MNRTF $10,000 Local Funds $4,000 In-Kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Development of additional County Park including excavation/grading, parking, picnic area, play equipment, and other amenities</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>$50,000 MNRTF $15,000 Local Funds $10,000 In-Kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Improvement to Black Lake County Park including increasing campsites, better picnic areas, more electrical hook-ups, new dumping station, playground equipment.</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$38,000 LWCF $10,000 Local Funds $2,000 In-Kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Stony Lake park improvements including clearing for added picnic area, new boat launch, grading to launch &amp; guard rails</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$7,500 MSWG $1,500 Local Funds $1,000 In-Kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Cedar Point Park improvements including replacing stairs, place more picnic tables and grills.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$7,500 MNRTF $1,500 Local Funds $1,000 In-Kind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The County may try to use other funding sources to complete the above projects or other projects that may become priorities in the future such as a creek or river restoration or trail project. If other funding sources can be secured, projects may be amended into the CIP. It is understood that the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission may not get grants every year of this plan to complete development projects, however, the Capital Improvement Schedule has allowed the County to identify priorities and options over the life of the plan. This will allow for choices to be made based on the will of the general public.

c. Conclusion

If properly used, the Oceana County Recreation Plan will assist Oceana County in properly managing future recreation development. The Plan is a guide for decisions, and should be consulted regularly. Public input is an important facet of this process and should be utilized when recreation facility decisions need to be made.

The Plan should be updated as the local situation warrants, or every five years as requested by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to allow the County to remain eligible for grant consideration.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Land and Water Management Division. White River Natural River Zoning. Lansing, MI, 1992


Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Real Estate Division. "Farmlands and Open Space Program." Lansing, MI, March 27, 1997.


OCEANA PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Jean Pease, Chairperson
Connie Cargill, Secretary
Jerry Malburg
Denny Powers
Al Seng
Joel Mikkelsen
Ron Steiner
Dan Swihart
Russ Eilers
Jess Beckman
Ideas Wanted for Rec plan

Public input is wanted by the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission as it starts updating its 2009 Parks and Recreation Plan.

Chairman Jean Pease said she wants to see the public come and present ideas so the Commission can get a vision as to what to include in the plan.

"I think a lot of people have seen Crystal Valley and liked the way it turned out," Pease said. "It’s really going well. It gives us an incentive to do more."

The 130,000 Crystal Valley Park project included a new picnic shelter and picnic tables with several BBQ grills; new bleachers and dugouts for the baseball diamond, new game gear, including horseshoe courts, new playground equipment, soccer goals, trees and brush removal and new fishing deck.

The Commission will meet at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 19 with the primary agenda item being to update the plan. The Commission meets in the board of Commissioners room in Hart.
Plan meeting/Public input:

Approximately 10 people attended the August 19, 2008 public meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission to discuss plans for the County Parks.

The majority of those attending were submitting ideas for the development of the Oceana County Mill Pond Park at Ferry.

Mr. David Schmeiding stated, "There are many young families in Ferry Township and there really is no safe recreational space for them. The river is a wonderful asset".

The residents of Ferry Township want to be involved in improving the park and in 2008 did a lot of cleaning of brush, sweeping clean the river bed where children swim, meeting to discuss ideas for the park.

Mr. Bill Harris of Shelby inquired about the status of the Hart-Montague Rail Trail.

At this point this is a State issue, however, there are several volunteers working on it at different locations.

There was also discussion about land that Walkerville Schools might be willing to donate or sell to the County to develop.
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
REGARDING OCEANA COUNTY
PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

Please be advised that the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, May 26, 2009 to receive input for the proposed Oceana County Parks and Recreation Plan. The meeting will take place at 3:30 p.m. in the Oceana Board of Commissioners Chambers, Oceana Courthouse, 100 North State St., Hart, Michigan. The regular Oceana Parks and Recreation meeting will follow. Both meetings are open to the public. Everyone with an interest in the recreation in Oceana County is encouraged to attend. The public meeting is being held to provide an opportunity for public input regarding direction to be taken by the Parks and Recreation Commission in regards to future recreation decisions. Citizen participation in this process is essential.

Written comments may also be submitted by May 26, 2009 to the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission, 100 N. State Street, Suite M11, Hart, MI 49420, or via email to ccargill@oceana.mi.us. If there are any questions please feel free to contact Connie Cargill at the Oceana County Drain Office, (231) 873-3887.
Plan meeting/Public input:

The public hearing regarding the Oceana County Parks and recreation plan was called to order by Chairperson Pease at 3:35 p.m. on May 26, 2009 in the Oceana Board of Commissioners Chambers in the Oceana Courthouse, Hart, Michigan.

Present for the hearing was Bud Lamb - Black Lake Campground Host, Stan Rickard and Doug Springstead from City of Hart, David Schmeiding and 6 other committee members from Ferry Township.

Chairperson Pease explained the purpose of the hearing was to obtain input from the public as to future plans for the County park system.

Lisa Walters of Ferry Township presented a handout with suggestions for possible improvements for the Mill Pond County Park in Ferry which included a well, a pavilion, some picnic grills, picnic tables, benches, security lighting, footpaths, a bridge over the river and to re-establish the pond.
Appendix B:

Plan Review and Public hearing:

Published in the Herald-Journal July 15, 2009

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
AND PUBLIC REVIEW REGARDING
COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION PLAN

Please be advised that the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, August 18, 2009, to receive input for the proposed Oceana County Parks and Recreation Plan. The hearing will take place at 3:00 p.m. at the Oceana County Board of Commission Chambers 100 N. State Street, Hart Michigan. Immediately following the hearing for the Recreation Plan the regular meeting of the Oceana County Parks and Recreation will take place. Both meetings are open to the public.

The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Plan will be on display for public review prior to the scheduled public hearing. Citizens can review the plan between July 14 through August 18, 2009 at the Drain Office in the Oceana County Courthouse, 100 N. State Street, Hart, Michigan. Citizen participation in this process is essential and the public is welcome to review the plan during the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Written comments may also be submitted by August 17, 2009 to the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission via email at or mail to Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission, 100 N. State Street, Hart, MI 49420. If there are any questions please feel free to contact Ms. Jean Pease, Chairperson, Oceana Parks and Recreation Commission at (231) 861-5027 or Connie Cargill at (231) 873-3887.
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
AND PUBLIC REVIEW REGARDING
COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

Please be advised that the OCEANA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, August 18, 2009, to receive input for the proposed Oceana County Parks and Recreation Plan. The hearing will take place at 3:00 p.m. at the Oceana County Board of Commission chambers, 100 N. State Street, in Hart, Michigan. Immediately following the hearing for the Recreation Plan the regular meeting of the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission will take place. Both meetings are open to the public.

The Oceana County Parks and Recreation Plan will be on display for public review prior to the scheduled public hearing. Citizens can review the plan between August 1 through August 18, 2009 at the Drain Office in the Oceana County Courthouse, 100 N. State Street, Hart, Michigan. Citizen participation in this process is essential and the public is welcome to review the plan during the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Written comments may also be submitted by August 17, 2009 to the Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission via email at or mail to Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission, 100 N. State Street, Hart, Michigan 49420. If there are any questions please feel free to contact Mrs. Jean Pease, Chairperson, Oceana Parks and Recreation Commission at (231) 861-5027 or Connie Cargill at (231) 873-3887.
Public Hearing & Plan Review

The public hearing was called to order at 3:00 p.m., August 18, 2009, in the Oceana County Commissioners board conference Room.

Present: Al Seng, Russ Eilers, Ron Steiner, Denny Powers, Jean Pease Connie Cargill.

Public present: David Schmeiding, Ferry Township Supervisor – representing the residents of Ferry Township; Bud Lamb, representing Black Lake Camp ground.

Mr. Seng stated that the Newfield Township land on the White River is on the agenda for spring of 2010.

Chairperson Pease gave an update on the statistics of population, jobs, etc. for Oceana County that have changed considerably in the past few years.

Mr. Schmeiding said that the volunteers from Ferry Township have been clearing up a lot of brush and dead trees, raked the river bed clean and done a lot of general clean up. They are excited about working with the County to establish a clean riverside park in Ferry.

Bud Lamb said that more campsites will be welcome at Black Lake, in particular more with electricity; and getting water to the sites would be nice also.

Plans for all the parks were discussed and everyone voiced satisfaction with the recreation plan as presented.

There being no other comments or suggestions and no mail or email comments received, the Public Hearing was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.
Oceana County Board of Commissioners

- Oceana County Planning Commission
- Oceana County Parks and Recreation Commission
- Other County Boards and Commissions